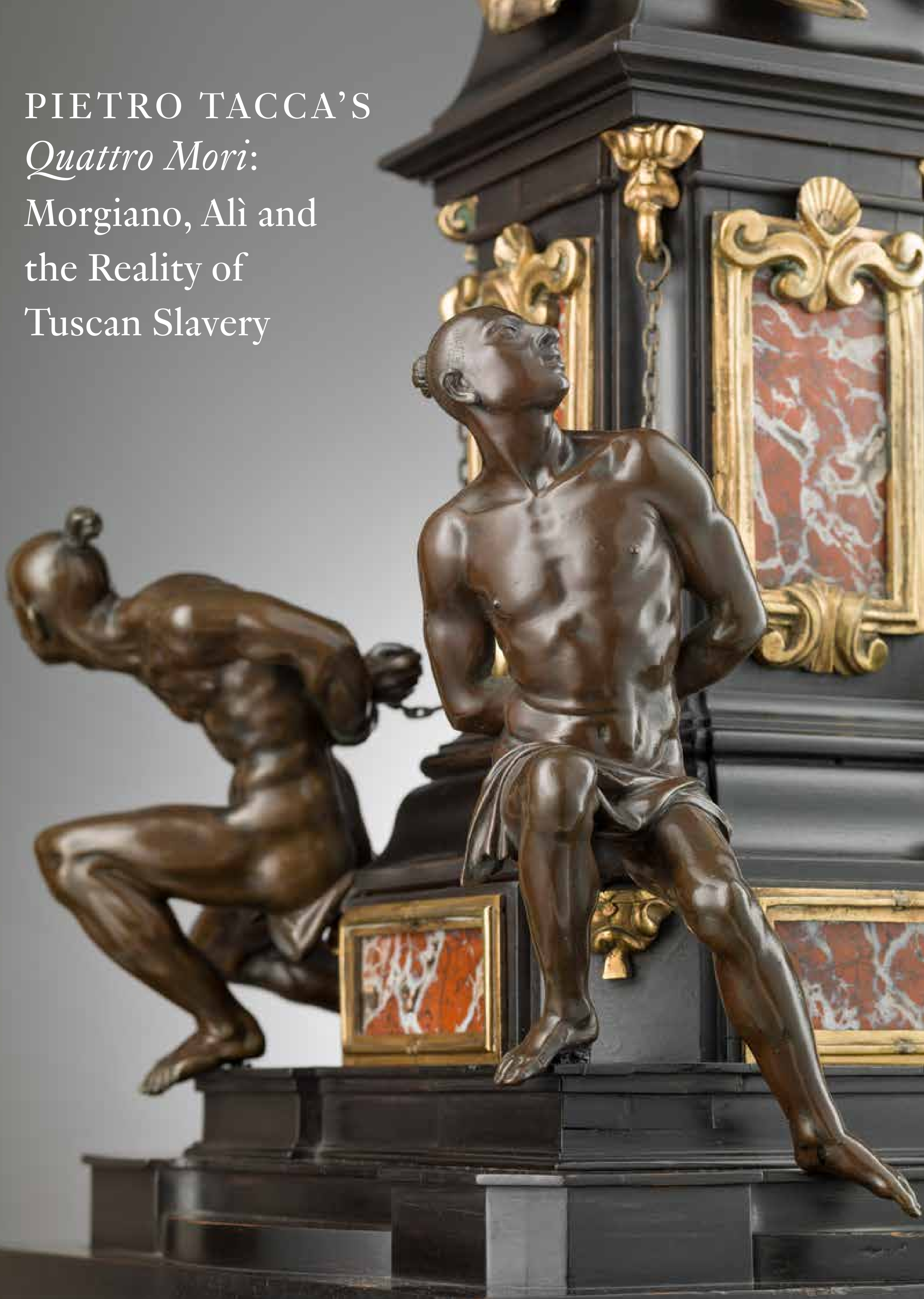
PIETRO TACCA'S *Quattro Mori*: Morgiano, Alì and the Reality of Tuscan Slavery



Pietro Tacca's *Quattro Mori*: Morgiano, Alì and the Reality of Tuscan Slavery

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FIG. 1
Giovanni Bandini and Pietro Tacca, *Monument to Ferdinando I de' Medici*, 1599–1626, Livorno, Piazza Micheli

IN 1799, WHEN FRENCH TROOPS under the command of Sextius Alexandre François Miollis arrived in the Tuscan port of Livorno, they confronted in the city's harbor the *Monument to Ferdinando I de' Medici* (fig. 1) with its marble statue of the standing grand duke at its center and, below, four seated enslaved men, cast in bronze, chained to the corners of the base. In response to what he saw, Miollis wrote the following words to the members of Livorno's city council:

> A single monument exists in Livorno and it is a monument to tyranny that insults humanity. Four captives, a hundred times more courageous than the ferocious Ferdinando who treads on them, chained to the pedestal [...] offer a distressing spectacle as soon as one sets foot in the port. Feelings of pain, of scorn, of contempt, and of hatred should necessarily disturb every sensible soul that approaches it. Let us avenge the injury done to humanity! You should be pleased, citizens, to order a statue of Liberty to be substituted for the one of that monster. Let one hand break the chains of the four slaves, while the other smashes with a pick the head of Ferdinando spread out on the ground.

The general's reaction to the Livornese monument – penned just eleven years after the founding of the *Societè des amis des Noirs* in Paris and five years after the abolition of slavery by the French Constituent Assembly – speaks to both the utter immorality of slavery and the deeply problematic nature of honoring a ruler who used enslavement as a basis of his power. There is also something profoundly ironic in his words, given that in 1802 slavery was reinstated in France and its territories. But Miollis's statement of disgust, his indictment of Ferdinando I de' Medici, was more than just an expression of political or moral fervor. It was also a deeply emotional response to the bronze statues, known as the *Quattro Mori* (Four Moors), representing four individually characterized Ottoman slaves, one of whom is a black African, fettered and struggling against their captivity, with expressions of anguish and hopelessness. In other words, it is their inescapable sense of suffering – their extreme pathos – that demands our attention, just as it did that of the French general and of many others. And in confronting them, seeing but also feeling their presence, they virtually cease being bronze statues and become, instead, actual men – embodiments of the human condition, heroic and tragic at the same time, whose story and distinctive humanity we want to know.

To know their story one must first consider the history of the monument they adorn and the circumstances of its creation. It is a history that began

in 1595 when Ferdinando I de' Medici (r. 1587–1609), the Grand Duke of Tuscany, commissioned the Florentine sculptor Giovanni Bandini (1539/40–1599) to carve a colossal statue for the city of Livorno. Completed in 1599, the statue depicts Ferdinando as a victorious military ruler, wearing armor, with a sword hanging from his hip, holding a baton of command in his right hand (fig. 2). Emblazoned on his breastplate is an eight-pointed cross, the symbol of the *Cavalieri di Santo Stefano*, of which, as grand duke, Ferdinando served as grand master. Founded in 1561 by Ferdinando's father, Cosimo I (1519–1574), the Knights of St Stephen was a military order whose primary mission was to protect the Tuscan coast from Ottoman Turks and Barbary pirates and to liberate Christian slaves. In developing Livorno, Ferdinando followed in his father's footsteps, making it the primary port for the order's fleet, a fortified city, and the center of the Tuscan slave trade. Bandini's statue was thus conceived as a work of visual propaganda, as a symbol of Medici power, intended to immortalize Ferdinando in his role as grand master of the order dedicated to fighting Muslims.

Although the statue of the grand duke was transported to Livorno in 1601, it was not until 1617 that it was erected upon its base. In the intervening period, either Ferdinando or his successor and son, Cosimo II (r. 1609–1621) conceived the idea of adorning the monument with sculptures of captive slaves – to further the grand duke's image as a triumphant leader who subjugates his enemies. And according to two early accounts, Pietro Tacca (1577–1640), the Medici court sculptor, was then sent to Livorno to visit the *bagno dei forzati* – a large, fortified, prison-like complex that housed the thousands of galley slaves taken by the Tuscan forces – in order to make studies for the monument's statues.

The Livorno that Tacca visited to make his studies of slaves was a vibrant port city on the Tyrrhenian Sea, which, over the course of a few decades, had undergone a radical transformation. After founding the *Sacro Ordine dei Cavalieri di Santo Stefano* in 1561, Cosimo I envisioned Livorno becoming an important trade center and the launching point for the order's fleet. Although he had initiated the city's modernisation and expansion, it was during the reign of Ferdinando I as Grand Duke of Tuscany that Livorno was virtually built anew. The fortress was expanded, canals were dug, new roads were laid, and the port was enlarged to accommodate the fleet. Ferdinando declared it an open city (a *porto franco*), a refuge allowing merchants from around the Mediterranean and beyond, including Jews, Corsicans, Turks, Persians, Armenians, as well as the Dutch, Germans, English, and French, to conduct business and practice their faith. Livorno's population expanded rapidly, from around 500 in 1560

FIG. 2
Giovanni Bandini, *Grand Duke Ferdinando I de' Medici*, *Monument to Ferdinando I de' Medici*, det., 1599

to ca. 3500 in 1600, and then to over 10,000 in 1622. A notable portion of the inhabitants was made up of slaves, as Livorno was the port where 'infidels' captured by the Tuscan knights were brought, housed, sold, and ransomed. In 1622 slaves constituted around ten percent of the city's population, with galley slaves, primarily Ottoman Turks and Maghrebis (North Africans), making up the majority. Taken in naval and land battles, as well as through state-sponsored piracy, the enslaved were the property of the state, human chattel, serving the grand duke as laborers and, especially, as oarsmen for the Tuscan ships. The number of slaves captured by the Knights of St Stephen and brought to Livorno was staggering. Between 1600 and 1620 the number exceeded 6000, with ca. 2000 taken just in the 1607 siege of Bona (modern-day Annaba, Algeria), the most important of all land battles fought by the *Cavalieri* in North Africa in the seventeenth century. All of the galley slaves brought to Livorno were housed in the *bagno*, the foremost symbol of Tuscany's brutal slave trade, in which Tacca, as noted, is said to have made his studies for the *Quattro Mori*.

Returning to the history of the monument, the two early sources that inform us about the sculptor's visit to the *bagno* and his encounter with the enslaved men who would serve as his models are the writer and art critic Filippo Baldinucci (1625-1696), in his biography of Tacca, published posthumously in 1702, and the eighteenth-century chronicler of Livorno, Mariano Santelli. According to the former, Tacca, when visiting the *bagno*:

> was able to make use of many slaves, with the most graceful musculature and best suited for imitation to form from them the most perfect body, and he made casts of their most beautiful parts. One of them was a Moorish Turk slave [*Schiavo Moro Turco*], known by his nickname Morgiano, who for his size and all of his features was very beautiful, and he was of great help to Tacca in producing the beautiful figure, with its effigy made from life, that we see today.

Santelli, in turn (citing earlier manuscript sources), recorded that after being asked to adorn the monument with four statues of Turkish slaves:

> Tacca […] went to the *bagno* of Livorno to see and to consider from close up, one by one, all of the Turkish slaves, and finally took his inspiration and the model for the first of the two that he was to cast […] from a certain Turkish slave,a native of Algeria of youthful age, strong, well formed, muscular, in sum

FIG. 3
Pietro Tacca, *'Alì'* (southwest corner figure), 1623

FIG. 4
Pietro Tacca, *'Morgiano'* (southeast corner figure), 1623

FIG. 5
Pietro Tacca, *Slaves* (northeast and northwest corner figures), 1626

> most perfect in all his parts, and of uncommon stature, named Morgiano; and for the second [statue] from a robust old Saletin named Alì.

These two early accounts are striking in a number of ways. First, they are filled with references to beauty and bodily perfection to describe a Moorish slave. Second, they tell us that the sculptor based his statues on live models, from whom he made body casts – to serve as models for the large-scale bronzes. Third – and most remarkably – they provide a rare, perhaps unique, instance of the naming of individual enslaved men represented on a public political monument: 'Morgiano' and 'Alì,' the first a youthful Moorish Turk ('Moro Turco') identified by Santelli as an Algerian, the second an older Turk, referred to as a Saletin, in reference to the port city of Salé in northwestern Morocco.

Although the precise date of Tacca's visit to the *bagno* to make his studies of the slaves is uncertain, we do know that after purchasing the marble for the monument's base, in May of 1617 the statue of Ferdinando I was raised on its pedestal and unveiled in the presence of Cosimo II and members of the Medici court. Five years later, while the sculptor was engaged in casting the first two of the slave statues, one of his assistants made an addition to the base of the statue of the grand duke, raising it higher – an aesthetic decision in anticipation of the placement of the corner statues. Then in March of 1623 Tacca transported the first two of the bronzes to Livorno and placed them on the base – the older enslaved man at the monument's southwest corner (fig. 3) and the slave at its south-east corner (fig. 4), the only sub-Saharan African figure among the four. By the end of 1625 the other two bronzes had been cast, and by June of 1626 they too were installed (fig. 5). But additional work remained to be carried out: notably the casting of the Ottoman and Maghrebi trophies and spoils of war to be placed below the grand duke's feet. Described by Santelli as 'a royal mantle in the Barbary fashion [...,] a royal turban, scimitar, bow, quiver, arrows, etc.,' they were cast in 1633-1634 and finally installed by the sculptor's son Ferdinando Tacca in 1638. Although these trophies were removed and melted down by the French in 1799, their original appearance is recorded in (*inter alia*) an etching by Stefano della Bella (1610-1664) of 1655 (fig. 6) and in the two small-scale reductions of the monument by Ferdinando Tacca (1619-1696), one belonging to Trinity Fine Art, London (fig. 7) and the other in the Real Academia di Bellas Artes di San Fernando, Madrid. Soon after the placement of the trophies, the monument was unveiled in the presence of Ferdinando II de' Medici (r. 1621-1670) and his

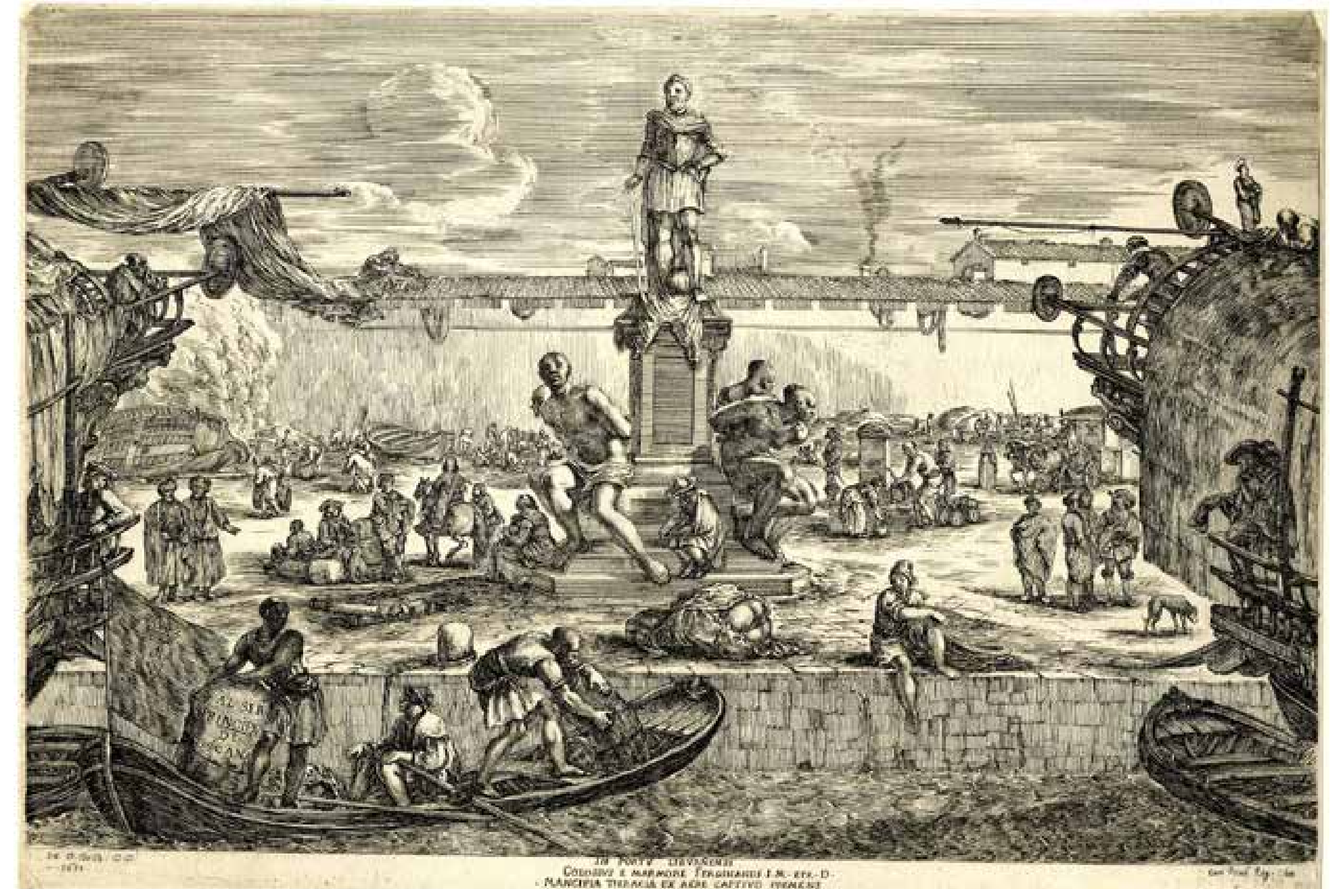


FIG. 6
Stefano della Bella, *Harbor of Livorno with the Quattro Mori*, ca. 1655

FIGS. 7a and 7b
Ferdinando Tacca, *Monument to Ferdinando I de' Medici*, reduced bronze, ca. 1638–1646

FIG. 8. Annibale Gatti, *Inauguration of the Monument of Ferdinando I de' Medici*, 1874, oil on canvas, Villa Mimbelli, Livorno

wife, Vittoria della Rovere, an event reimagined in a painting of 1874 by Annibale Gatti (fig. 8).

Upon its completion, the *Monument to Ferdinando I* assumed a conspicuous place in Medici identity. It was prominently featured in the cycle of frescoes dedicated to the history of the Medici family (the *Fasti medicei*) commissioned by Ferdinando I's son, Don Lorenzo (1599–1648), to adorn the courtyard of the Villa Petraia outside Florence. Carried out between 1636 and 1646 by Baldassare Franceschini (1611–1690), called Il Volterrano, the fresco, entitled 'Ferdinando I Lord of the Seas,' shows the statue of the grand duke at the monument's center being crowned by winged Victories, as Neptune, Galatea, and Perseus emerge from the sea and, off to the right, personifications of Fame, Tuscany, the Grand Duchy, and Livorno look on with admiration. The monument also figures at the center of the aforementioned print by Stefano della Bella, as well as in one other contemporary etching, both of which form part of his series entitled *Views of the Port of Livorno*. And so important was it to the family that Ferdinando Tacca, who succeeded his father as court sculptor, was commissioned by his Medici patrons to produce a small-scale reduction of the monument, known in the two versions mentioned above. While both are extraordinarily fine-crafted objects, the London version is the superior of the two, combining bronze figures, gilt bronze decorative elements, and an ebonised pear wood base inset with variegated jasper panels. Although its precise origins remain obscure, it was almost certainly made for domestic display and was commissioned, in all likelihood, by Don Lorenzo – either for his Villa Petraia or his Florentine palace (the present Palazzo Corsini in the via del Parione) – as a *ricordo* of the work in Livorno and as a symbol of his father's glory.

Within just a few years of the monument's completion, visitors to Livorno began writing about it, focusing their attention on Pietro Tacca's *Quattro Mori*. Their observations vary widely, some writing about the statues' aesthetic value, some on their emotive qualities, and others on the monument's political and social implications. The majority of commentary was penned during the age of the Grand Tour, when Livorno – or Leghorn, as it was called in English – as the chief port of Tuscany, was virtually a compulsory stop. And it was during this period that stories, some of them absolutely fantastic, about the enslaved men's identities proliferated. Altogether, the commentary on the monument, written by English, French, German, Irish, Italian, Dutch, and American travelers, not only underscores the fame of the *Quattro Mori* but also provides vivid evidence of what I noted above: the way the slave statues virtually compel viewers to see them as individual men and to know their story.

Comments focusing on the statues' aesthetic and expressive qualities begin with the Englishman John Evelyn, who visited Livorno in 1644. Writing about Tacca's statues in his *Diary*, he declared 'the fowre slaves of Copper [sic] much exceeding the life for proportion [are] in the judgment of most Artists one of the best pieces of modern Worke that was ever don.' Two years later, another Englishman, John Raymond, described Tacca's figures as '*Colosses* of foure slaves […] in brasse [sic] in divers Postures,' which are 'so lively represented, that if Statuary could have fram'd a voice as well as those bodies, he might have conquerd nature.' In 1730 the British travel writer Edward Wright opined that the 'old Slave is most excellent,' adding, 'and all the Slaves are (I think) better than the principal Figure.' A few years later, in 1737, Karl Ludwig von Pöllnitz, the German adventurer and writer, described the four slaves as being 'in admirable Attitudes' and noted 'The *Connoisseurs* reckon them Master-pieces.' In his guidebook of 1751, Pandolfo Titi heaped praise upon Tacca for having 'masterfully represented' the slaves, and for 'having imitated nature in such a lifelike way, that few masters have succeeded so well in their works.' Charles-Nicolas Cochin, the French engraver and secretary of the Royal Academy, in his *Voyage d'Italie* of 1769, called the central statue 'a bad figure' but admired Tacca's bronzes as 'beautiful, especially the two older figures; whose features are quite grand, expressive, and pained.' The French astronomer

and writer Joseph Jérôme de Lalande, in his *Voyage d'un François en Italie*, also of 1769, ridiculed the statue of Ferdinando as being 'devoid of movement, its design and execution equally poor.' But the composition of the four slaves, he wrote, 'is excellent, particularly that of the two older ones.' And rounding out the commentary from the eighteenth century on the statues' aesthetic value are the words of Thomas Dunckerley, a well-known Grand Master of the Freemasons, published in *The Free-Mason's Magazine* in 1795. The 'Brazen Men,' as he called them, are one of 'the two chief things that attract the eye of a stranger at his landing' in Livorno. It is, he continued, 'universally allowed to be the most finished work in its kind. [...]; and surely nothing but the view of these admirable pieces [the figures of the four chained men] can give an adequate idea of their beauties.'

As the Grand Tour persisted in popularity during the nineteenth century, so travelers continued to make their way to Livorno and to add to the monument's literary tradition. John Milford, Jr., in his 1818 chronicle of his European travels, judged Tacca's slaves to have been 'executed with great spirit. One scarcely knows,' he wrote, 'which to admire most, the symmetry displayed in their figures, or the different expressions of grief in their countenance.' In his travel journal of 1820, James Wilson similarly praised the slave statues for their 'well discriminated expression of feeling, arising from defeat and subjection,' and, like many writers before him, condemned the statue of Ferdinando as being 'contemptible in point of art.' Five years later, the Reverend Thomas Pennington echoed Milford and Wilson, writing that the monument's statues are 'remarkably well done, particularly the slaves, whose countenances are marked with a savage ferocity.' Joseph-Romain Colomb, author of *Journal d'un Voyage en Italie et en Suisse* of 1833, praised the faces of the enslaved men for expressing 'pain accompanied by resignation.' 'The head of the negro,' he added, 'especially, seems to me perfect.' The Louisiana planter, Henry Watkins Allen, in his travel account of 1861 called the monument 'an astonishing piece of sculpture' that 'attracts much attention.' And Giuseppe Piombanti, in his guidebook to Livorno of 1873, asserted that Tacca's statues are exceptionally praiseworthy, to be admired for their 'harmonious proportion, beauty of form, naturalness of pose and expression, anatomical study, and such suppleness of limbs that you would not say they are of molded bronze, but of human flesh tinted with the color of bronze.'

In marked contrast, other visitors to Livorno ignored the statues' artistic virtues and focused instead on the political and social implications of the monument, seeing it as a repulsive glorification of slavery. Much as Miollis wrote in 1799, the great French writer Stendhal penned in his *Journal* in 1814: 'It is truly a poor idea to surround a prince with the eternal image of pain.' The American newspaper editor Nathaniel Hazeltine Carter, in his *Letters from Europe* of 1827, considered the monument to be 'absolutely repulsive,' asserting, 'Petty sovereignty is here clothed in its most revolting attributes.' 'The spectator turns away [from it] with disgust' and, he continued, 'this monument should be [...] removed from public view.' In a novel published in the same year, *English Fashionables Abroad*, Mrs. C. D. Burdett, situating the monument within the still-active slave trade in the city, referred to Tacca's figures as 'four wretched slaves, whose effigies thus remind the still more wretched slaves who clank their chains in daily labour at their feet, that death alone dissolves their bondage.' Rembrandt Peale, the early nineteenth-century American painter, likewise condemned the monument in his *Notes on Italy* of 1831 as being 'disgusting' for its inclusion of four enslaved men 'in attitudes of submission and terror.' In his *A Pilgrim's Reliquary* of 1845, the Reverend Thomas Henry White gave an extended condemnation of the monument, informed by his (British) abolitionist sentiments. Calling it 'the most pitiless production of Sculpture I ever yet beheld,' he asked, rhetorically, 'could they find no fitter pedestal for [the image of Ferdinando], than four naked fellow-creatures, chained and writhing in the most abject postures of Captivity?' 'Who can endure,' he continued, 'to see pride perpetualized in Marble, or humiliation immortalized in Bronze?' In a similar vein, Camillo Mapei, the Italian-born theologian who spent the latter part of his life in England and Ireland, wrote in his Italian guidebook of 1847 that 'we can but regret that they [the figures of the slaves] should form the support of a monument erected to the memory of a prince [...]. The fettered limbs, and the despairing, grief-worn countenances of these slaves, are either utterly out of place, or they offer inevitable evidence of vindictive spirit on the part of the prince whose statue they sustain.' The Irish writer Hamilton Geale noted in 1848 that the monument has been 'justly and severely animadverted upon' for memorialising the grand duke's 'barbarous treatment of the four Turkish prisoners,' and three years later, Josephine Dulles Eppes, the wife of the Confederate planter and slave owner Richard Eppes, expressed sadness at the sight of the 'four slaves chained at the corners of the pedestal, writhing with their hands fettered behind them, and faces expressing so much despair and mental suffering.'

A third category of responses to Tacca's statues comprises stories and legends about the identity of the *Quattro Mori* and how they came to adorn Ferdinando's monument. These apocryphal accounts, based in all likelihood on local traditions and swashbuckling fantasies, can be understood on

two levels. First, they participate in the longstanding tradition of literary responses to vivid public sculptures, such as the poems and panegyrics written in response to Giambologna's *Sabines* in Florence. Second, and more importantly, they respond to the monument's startlingly unusual subject matter, and to the vivid, lifelike slave statues, so moving in their collective expression of human bondage that they demanded, in a way, an explanation. The earliest such legend is recounted in a very summary fashion by Richard Lassels in his *The Voyage of Italy* of 1670. The bronze statues, he writes, 'are the 4 slaves that would have stoln away a galley and have rowed here themselves alone; but were taken in their great enterprize.' Soon after, the Dutch writer, Jan Janszoon Struys, in his travel book of 1676, enriched this account, claiming that the monument was erected:

> in memory of the audacity of a father and his three sons, Barbary Moors, who attempted to row away a Galley, belonging to the Duke of Tuscany; and ply'd so strongly that the rest of the Galleys, had enough to do to overtake them, and were ready to yield it for lost. […] and for that notable Essay, [they] are recorded with their Images in metal […] with their hands behind their back.

When next told, the story had evolved. According to the French Jesuit missionary, Guy Tachard, in the 1689 account of his travels as a royal ambassador, the monument commemorates three Turks and a Moor, who attempted to flee Livorno on a Tuscan galley but were overtaken. Tachard then adds that the four were executed on the very spot the monument was erected. In his *Voyages Historiques de l'Europe* of 1704, Claude Jordan de Columbier repeated the story that the statues depict four Turkish slaves who attempted to escape to 'Barbary' but were captured and executed. But, he added, 'some people say that they were a father and his three sons, who were sent by the Sultan to assassinate the grand duke, but their plan was discovered, they were apprehended and punished.'

In his *Memoirs* of 1737, Karl Ludwig von Pöllnitz, gave the legend an entirely new twist, altering the identity of the four enslaved men and describing the event of their capture. The four 'Turks,' whose great size, he noted, made 'the Vulgar think they represent four Giants,' were 'the Great Grandfather, the Grandfather, the Father and the Son.' While on board a Turkish vessel, the youngest of the four, who was an astrologer, prophesied to his companions their capture and enslavement. And this 'came to pass, for they were taken by the Great Duke's Gallies, and this Prince caus'd their Statues to be carv'd, to transmit the Event to Posterity.'

Another, extended version of the legend – a concatenation of earlier narratives with newly invented ones – was put forth by Thomas Dunckerley in 1795. The 'Brazen men,' he claimed, represent an 'old man and his three sons of a more than common and gigantic stature and strength' who were taken prisoners by 'one of the Dukes of Tuscany' who 'was particularly pleased with his conquest […] and reserved them for an appointed day to satisfy his people's desire in putting them to death.' One night the four escaped on a small boat but the duke's son, accompanied by armed men, 'overtook these poor wretches just as they were on the point of landing on the Barbary coast.' After a violent struggle, the prince captured the men and transported them back to Livorno, where they were greeted by the duke and his court. However, is a spectacular reversal, when it was revealed that the duke's son had set foot on the 'Barbarian coast,' Dunckerley related:

> the whole assembly was struck in grief, a law then being in force by which who ever should on any pretence offer to set foot on the shore after having been on the coast of Barbary, without first receiving product or performing quarantine, was to forfeit his life. Justice, then, doomed this unhappy prince to death in the midst of his triumph. The wretched father, overwhelmed with grief, was obliged to pronounce his son's sentence; and in order to make some retaliation for the cruelty of his fate, sacrificed the four slaves on his tomb, and afterwards caused this statue to be erected in commemoration of the fact.

In Dunckerley's account, the legend reached its most dramatic and incredible height. Not surprisingly, subsequent writers repeated it, making certain modifications to the slaves' identities, but retaining the essential components of their initial capture, escape, and recapture, the duke's son's breach of quarantine laws, his execution by his grief-stricken father, and the duke's retaliatory execution of the enslaved men. James Wilson, for example, in his 1820 account, identified the four men as 'an Algerine pirate, his two sons, and a moorish slave' and wrote 'these statues, it is said, were cast to perpetuate the deliverance of Leghorn from the pirates.' In *The Edinburgh Magazine* in 1825 a new conclusion to the legend was introduced. After the duke's son returned to Livorno with the slaves (here a Moor and his three sons 'whom tradition records to have been of gigantic, Herculean strength, and daring courage'), he was condemned and executed by his father. But 'the citizens of Florence, exulting in their freedom from ferocious robbers, and out of gratitude to their deliverer, erected to his memory the statues.' And in a final version of the legend, which appeared

in *A Tour through Part of France, Switzerland, and Italy* of 1827, we read that the duke's son, 'having made a public procession through the city, and with his unfortunate captives chained to his car, his crime was pardoned in consideration of his valour.'

Some authors ignored these fantastic legends, focusing instead on the ethnicity, age, or expression of the figures, with a few giving them allegorical interpretations. With respect to their perceived ethnicity, Edward Wright, for example, in his travel account of 1730, noted with modest caution that 'Some imagine the four Slaves to represent four several parts of the *Turkish* Dominions,' and noted, 'one of the young ones is manifestly intended for a Negro.' James Wilson, who provided one of the longest versions of the legend of the slaves in his 1820 *Journal*, asserted, perhaps in direct response to Wright, that 'some imagine that these four slaves are meant to personify four several parts of the Turkish dominions,' adding, 'but this is a very poor account of them.' And the French playwright and librettist, Étienne de Jouy, in his *The Hermit in Italy* of 1825, identified the men as representing the four parts of the world, Europe, Asia, Africa, and America. Among those to whom the enslaved men's ages were their most salient characteristic, Joseph Spence, writing in 1732, observed that 'In the statues of the four slaves their affliction is admirably varied according to their age.' Joseph Jérôme de Lalande simply noted in his *Voyage d'un François* of 1769 that Tacca's statues 'represent four African nudes, of different ages,' while Pandolfo Titi, in his guidebook of 1751, saw them as four Turks personifying 'the different qualities of human nature,' with two of youthful age, one of virile age, and the other of advanced age. Thus, he concluded, they show us that 'human life has three seasons, one in youth, another in virility, and the other in old age.'

A few writers focused on the moods or expressions of the men. John Milford Jr. (in 1818) noted 'the different expressions of grief in their countenances.' James Wilson (1820) described them with greater precision, writing, 'The old man seems to look to heaven with indignation and reproach; the two other Algerines are affected with a more lively grief and mortification; the Moor is marked by deep dejection, but yet resigned.' The anonymous author in *The Edinburgh Magazine* (1825), after recounting the legend at length, described the 'captive father' as having 'an expression of suppressed rage and fierceness in his countenance.' One of the sons, he continued, 'appears overwhelmed with despair. Of another the countenance is fallen, indicating deep dejection at his exiled and ignominious condition. The expression of the third seemed more difficult to read […] he is represented as sullen and dogged, and has an air of cool desperation.' Pietro Volpi, in his guide to Livorno of 1849, characterized the oldest slave as pensive and burdened by his position, another as dejected and resigned, with his gaze cast downward, the third as menaced, and the youngest, looking up, as lamenting his fate. Lastly, Octavia Walton Le Vert, the American society beauty from Mobile, Alabama, described the enslaved men in her travel account of 1857 as portraying four different expressions, 'anguish, despair, humiliation, and hatred.'

The critical responses to the *Monument to Ferdinando I* that appeared in travel literature subsided at the end of the nineteenth century, largely replaced by art historical writings. But the tradition was born anew in the digital age on the World Wide Web, where one finds countless websites and blogs that focus on the monument and, especially, on Tacca's *Mori*. While a number of these websites present information gleaned from the scholarly literature, many ignore scholarship and take up the anecdotal tradition of travel writers from the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries. Some of these websites' authors reiterate the idea that the slaves personify the ages of man. Others state that they represent four distinct ethnic types: Greek (or Ionic), Turkish, Moroccan, and African. And one particular *favola*, which is repeated again and again, is especially worth noting. On one website we read that Tacca chose as his models 'two original galley slaves: a young man named Morgiano and an old one named Melioco. They say Morgiano was then pardoned, and he started a new free life in Firenze where he married and set up house.' Another website reports that Tacca 'used only two convicts as models for the 'Four Moors.' The younger was Morgiano […] and the older Alì. Both convicts were freed after the work and legend says that the younger Morgiano sometimes brought his new family to see 'his' monument.' And on a third website, we read that Tacca 'used two slaves as a model for his work and it is said that in return for posing for several months these two men were then set free. The younger one of the two moved to Florence and started a family there. On holidays he used to bring his family to Livorno so that they could admire his bronze likeness.' The story of 'Morgiano' and 'Alì' clearly lives on in the popular imagination – amusingly, often with a conventionally happy ending, replete with domestic bliss.

But is the story of 'Morgiano' and 'Alì' true? Virtually all scholars who have discussed the *Quattro Mori* have accepted the identifications as factually based, the only question being which of the statues should be connected to these names. Some have argued that 'Morgiano' is the young man looking skyward at the northwest corner of the monument (fig. 9), while others identify him as the figure at the southeast corner, looking

FIG. 9
Pietro Tacca, *Slave* (northwest corner figure), detail

FIG. 10
Pietro Tacca, *'Morgiano'* (southeast corner figure), detail

down in despair, the only black African among the four (figs. 4 and 10). There is general agreement that the figure at the southwest corner, representing an older man, with wrinkled forehead, moustache, and topknot, who strains against his shackles, is 'Alì' (figs. 3, 11, 17). While all four of the *Mori* are naturalistically portrayed and characterized in terms of their age, physiognomy, and expression, the most compellingly lifelike and individualised are the southeast and southwest figures, the first two that were cast and installed, which should, I believe, be identified as 'Morgiano' and 'Alì,' respectively. The other two, by contrast, appear more generalised as types, the northwest figure as an idealized youth (fig. 9), the northeast figure, with moustache and topknot, derived from 'Alì' (fig. 12). It also appears likely that Tacca intended two of the figures, those on the southwest and northeast corners (figs. 11 and 12), to be recognized as *buonevoglie*, a distinct class of galley oarsmen – freedmen forced into service to pay off debts – who, as described by Pantero Pantera, in his *L'armta navale* of 1614, 'are distinguished from the other [oarsmen] by their unshaven moustaches.'

The vivid characterisation and expressivity of the slave statues is unquestionably one of their most remarkable features – which clearly provoked the many sympathetic responses to them. One only need compare Tacca's bronzes to the slightly earlier bound captives that

FIG. 11
Pietro Tacca, *'Alì'* (southwest corner figure), detail

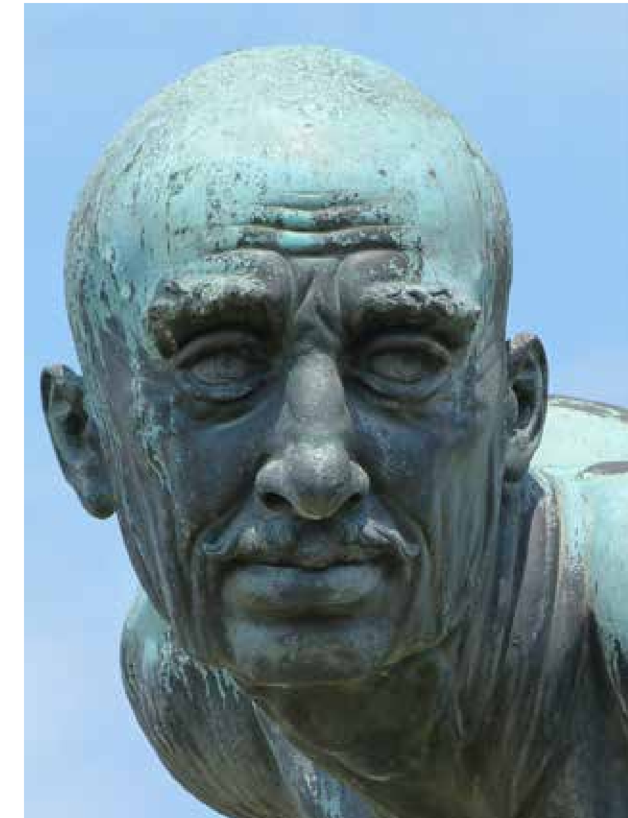


FIG. 12
Pietro Tacca, *Slave* (northeast corner figure), detail

formerly adorned the *Monument to Henri IV* in Paris (fig. 13), figures designed by Tacca's teacher, Giambologna (1529–1608), and cast by Pietro Francavilla (1548–1615) and Francesco Borboni (1580–1654), to recognise this distinctive aspect of their portrayal. Although the earlier figures are differentiated by age and type – one is young and beardless, two have beards and longish hair, and one appears to be African, with short curly hair and a headband (figs. 14a, 14b) – they lack the naturalism, expressivity, and individualised faces of the slave statues on the Livorno monument. Instead of being anonymous, generic types, Tacca's *Mori* are endowed with specific identities and two of them, as we have seen, even have names.

FIG. 13
Anonymous, *Monument to Henri IV*, 1617, engraving, published by Nicolas de Mathonière

Their powerful expressions and particularised physiognomic features are so pronounced as to make them appear to be true portraits, and thus it is not surprising that one scholar has called them the 'most realistic, most unexpected and forward-looking, and most moving' portraits that Tacca ever made. Nevertheless, we should again ask the question: Are the slave statues (at least those here identified as Morgiano and Alì) truly portraits, or might Baldinucci and Santelli have fabricated the story to enrich their discussions of the monument, inventing the names simply to account for their exceptional lifelikeness?

A document (discovered by this author), datable to ca.1616, just at the time when Tacca is said to have visited the *bagno*, provides intriguing evidence in support of the existence of certainly one and possibly both of these enslaved men. Running six folios in length and entitled 'Nota di Numero 164 schiavi Mori de Galeoni quali sono nel Bagnio, di reccatto, et non Reccatto Boni al Remo' ('List of 164 Moorish Slaves from the Warships who are in the Bagno, to be transferred, or not, to the Oars'), it is an inventory of 'Moorish' slaves housed in the *bagno* of Livorno (fig. 15).

FIGS. 14a and 14b
Pietro Francavilla and Francesco Bordoni, *Captives* (from the Monument to Henri IV), 1614–18

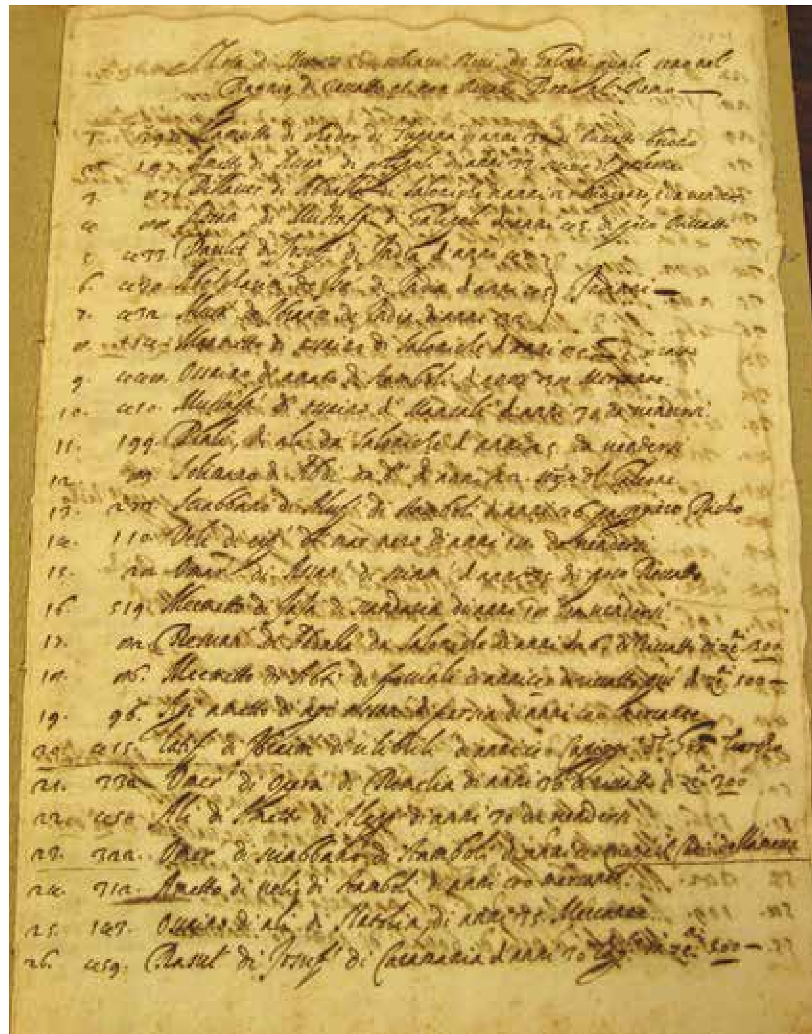
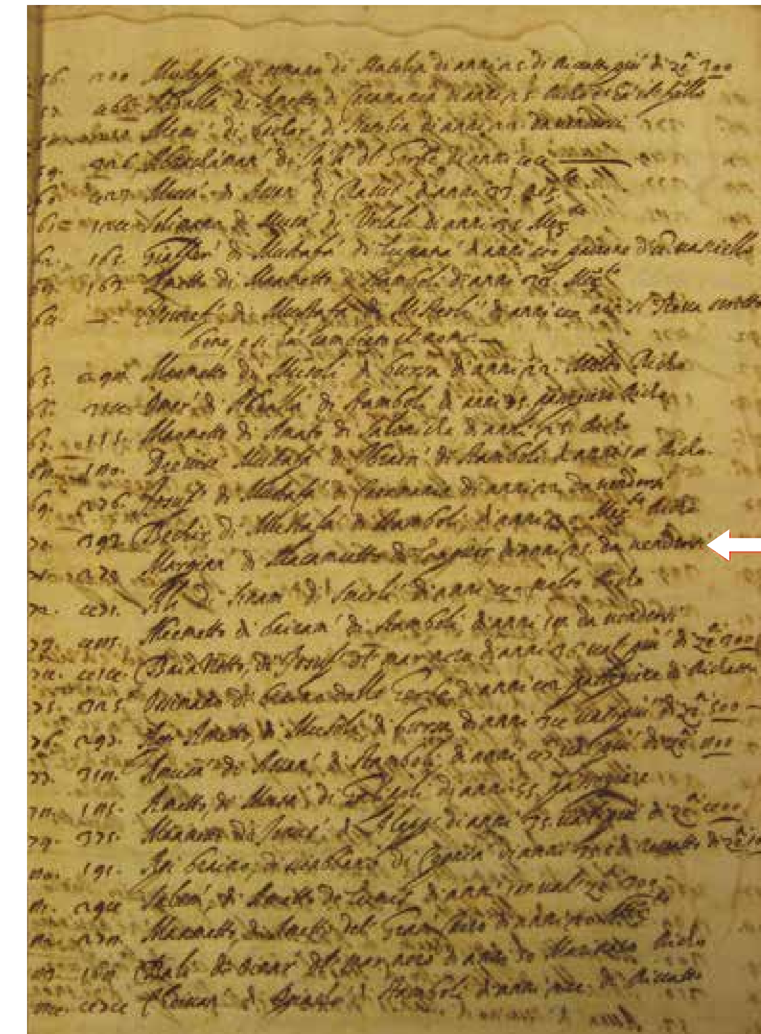


FIG. 15
'Nota di Numero 164 schiavi Mori de Galeoni quali sono nel Bagnio, di reccatto, et non Reccatto Boni al Remo,' fol. 1r, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota, James Ford Bell Library, MB 10314 1600f No

It begins with a list of 164 enslaved men, each identified by name, father's name, place of origin, and age, and, in some cases, an indication of whether he is to be sold, freed, or ransomed. A second list of fourteen slaves, designated 'Tagliati' follows – the term *tagliati* meaning those designated for ransom. A third list of 'Vec[c]hi' (old men) includes nine slaves, whose ages run between fifty and sixty-six. Another short list follows, which indicates how many slaves were taken from the ships according to age rank ('From one to ten,' 'From ten to twenty,' etc.). A fifth list entitled 'Nota di n.° 67 schiavi vecchi che sono buoni al Remo,' which includes groups of older slaves deemed capable of manning the oars, concludes the document. In most respects the 'Nota' is typical of such inventories of captured slaves compiled in Italy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. What is atypical and central to this discussion is this list's inclusion of certain names.

In the primary list of 164 slaves, the entry for number seventy-one reads as follows: 'Margian' di Macamutto di Tangiur, di anni 25. da vendersi' ('Margian' [son] of Macamutto from Tangier, twenty-five years old, to be

FIG. 16
'Nota di Numero 164 schiavi Mori,' fol. 2r, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota, James Ford Bell Library, MB 10314 1600f No



sold'; (fig. 16). This is the only 'Margian' named in the document. His age, twenty-five, conforms to Santelli's description of 'Morgiano' as being 'of youthful age,' and his place of origin, 'Tangiur,' presumably Tangier, albeit a city in modern Morocco, not Algeria, is sufficiently close to Algeria as to not rule out the identification; alternatively, Santelli (or his original source) could easily have erred in claiming that 'Morgiano' was a native of Algeria. The primary list also includes twelve enslaved men with the name of 'Ali,' but only three who might be considered 'old' as Santelli described him: one (number 39), forty-five years old, from Bursa (a city in northwestern Turkey); another (number 51), also forty-five, from 'Scandaria' (likely Alexandria in Egypt, called El-Iskandaria in Arabic); and a third, aged forty (number 72), from 'Smirli' (most likely Smirne in west-central Turkey), who is described as being 'molto richo' (very rich [and hence worthy of a high ransom]). A fourth Ali, fifty years old, from Agras (in south-central Turkey) also appears in the list of 'Vec[c]hi.'

Although none of the four older slaves named Ali in the 'Nota' is listed

as being from Salé, one of them could, nevertheless, be the 'Alì' named by Santelli as Tacca's model. If, in fact, Santelli erred in calling him a 'Saletin,' the Turkish origins of three of the four older men named Ali fits Santelli's general statement that the sculptor made studies of 'all of the Turkish slaves.' As to the 'Margian' in the document being the 'Morgiano' named by Baldinucci and Santelli, we can be more certain. Marjan (مرجان), which means 'coral' in Arabic, is not a traditional Ottoman or, for that matter, Arabic name; rather it is a non-Arabic name. Among lists of slaves in seventeenth-century Italy, this constitutes the sole instance of a Marjan among approximately 900 slave names that I have found. As with other jewel and perfume names, such as Lulu and Kafour, it is a slave name, and thus points to the likelihood that Marjan was a slave serving the Ottoman Turks at the time he was captured by the Knights of St. Stephen.

That Baldinucci referred to Morgiano as a 'Moro Turco' is significant. Although 'Moro' (Moor) is a generic designation in early modern Italian, often used interchangeably with the word 'Turco' and usually applied to both an African and to anyone from the Ottoman Empire (and hence the appellation of all four of Tacca's statues as 'Mori'), it could also denote a dark-skinned person. In sixteenth-century Venetian usage, 'turco moro' referred to a Turk, originally from Africa and usually a slave or descendant of a slave, with dark skin, full lips, a broad nose, and tightly curled hair. Moreover, Baldinucci, one of our key early sources, in his *Vocabolario toscano dell'arte del disegno* (*Tuscan Vocabulary of the Art of Design*) of 1681, defined 'Moro' (in its adjectival form) as 'black in complexion, like the Ethiopians and other peoples, inhabitants of Africa, otherwise called the Blacks.' Thus, in calling Morgiano a 'Moro' he clearly identified him as a black man of African descent. It is also important to note that Baldinucci tells us that Morgiano was the enslaved man's nickname, and in early modern Italy, as well as in other parts of Europe, it was very common to give a slave a nickname related to a distinguishing physiognomic trait or skin color, such as 'Dento' (toothy), 'Carbo' (charcoal), or 'Nerone' (big Black). In light of this tradition, it is reasonable to believe that the name Marjan (Margian) was transformed in Italy into the nickname 'Morgiano' based on the fact that *morgiano* was the name given to a black, or very dark, grape used in wine production, as we learn from Giovanvettorio Soderini's treatise on the cultivation of grapes, first published in Florence in 1600 and then reissued in 1610, 1622, and numerous subsequent editions. And not coincidentally, in modern Turkish, 'Gian' (or 'Can') is a common proper name meaning soul, while 'mor' means purple or dark violet. Thus, Marjan (or Morgian or Morcan) – 'dark soul' – is a plausible nickname for an African slave kept by the Ottoman Turks, which was then rendered in Italian as Morgiano.

Knowing that Marjan was a slave name, we may ask how he came to be a Turkish slave in the first place. The Ottoman Turks engaged in an active slave trade, capturing black Africans from the region of Sudan, who were sold through Maghrebi ports such as Algiers and Tripoli. The greatest source of African slaves, however, was from the sub-Saharan region, in West Africa, the home of the Songhai Empire. Ahmed I al-Mansur, Sultan of the Saadi Dynasty in Morocco from 1578 to 1603, undertook massive military campaigns against the Songhai, capturing many thousands of black slaves and bringing them back to Morocco. It may be posited, therefore, that Morgiano was either captured by the Ottoman Turks in the Sudan region or by the Moroccans in West Africa, and then captured and enslaved once again by the *Cavalieri di Santo Stefano*. When considered all together – the unusual name of Marjan (Margian) in the 'Nota,' the fact that Baldinucci wrote that one of the slave-models was known by his nickname Morgiano, and that *morgiano* is the term for a very dark type of grape – the evidence offers compelling support for the factual basis of the story of Tacca's encounter with Morgiano and Alì, for identifying Morgiano as the only sub-Saharan African among the four *Mori* (the figure at the southeast corner of the monument), and for identifying two of the *Mori* as being true portraits. As such, they should be recognized as the earliest sculpted likenesses of named slaves in the history of western art.

One does need to acknowledge, however, that for as much as the statues of the enslaved men depart from normative representations of such figures in being characterised as individuals with highly specific physiognomies and deeply sorrowful, even pathetic, facial expressions, the way in which Tacca depicted the four men also humiliated and demeaned them. Instead of showing them in the clothes in which galley slaves were dressed, in a cap, shirt, tights, and coat, he portrayed one of them entirely naked (Alì) – his exposed circumcised penis underscoring his alterity (fig. 17); and the other three have only a piece of cloth draped over their genitals. Although their complete or near nudity is distinctly unheroic, it does carry sexualised overtones; it is only the presence of the grand duke above them that suppresses their sexual threat and, so to speak, emasculates them, proclaiming their status as vanquished captives. They are also shackled, their hands fettered in irons behind their backs and attached to chains hanging from the corners of the central pedestal. And while Morgiano appears resigned to his fate, leaning slightly forward and looking downward, the others struggle against their constraints, their twisting, crouching, and contorting bodies serving as visual tropes of subjugation.

FIG. 17
Pietro Tacca, *'Alì'* (southwest corner figure)

AT THE END OF HIS ACCOUNT of Tacca's visit to the *bagno* and encounter with Morgiano, Baldinucci added the following:

> and I who write these things, in my childhood, at the age of ten, saw him [Morgiano], and recognised him, and spoke with him with pleasure, despite my youth; and I recognised him by comparing the beautiful original to his portrait.

Tacca's biographer, who was the author, among many other books, of the dictionary of artistic terminology cited above, clearly considered the sculptor's portrayal of Morgiano to be a portrait (*ritratto*), a term he defined (in his *Vocabolario*) as a 'figure taken from life' – and it should be recalled that Baldinucci used almost the very same language – an 'effigy made from life' – to describe the statue in his biography of the sculptor. Additionally, the author's anecdote about recognising the original Morgiano on the basis of his portrait functions as a rhetorical device, a trope, meant to emphasise the naturalism and expressivity of the sculptor's likeness of the man. But both the anecdote and Baldinucci's account of Tacca's encounter with Morgiano in the *bagno* have an even more fascinating aspect to them: a rhetoric of beauty (*bellezza*) that has, as far as I am aware, no parallel in the history of Italian Renaissance or baroque art. This unprecedented characterisation of a black African male as *bellissimo* (very beautiful) thus raises three interrelated questions: How were Blacks traditionally viewed at the time? How was beauty defined and on what basis? Why did Baldinucci describe Morgiano in the way that he did?

Although no clear concept of race existed in early modern Europe – indeed, race as we know the term today is a later social construct – people were categorised, especially, by the color of their skin. Dark-skinned people, generally Africans, were defined in opposition to white Europeans, their black or dark-brown skin considered a sign of 'otherness,' as being outside the social, moral, and religious order of the majority. Black was, in the popular imagination of white Europeans, the color of the devil, and black skin was generally viewed in highly negative ways as a social and cultural marker, associated with evil, sin, transgressive and uncivilised behavior, and non-Christian beliefs. It was also equated with deformity, corruption, even monstrosity – the negative basis for contempt and prejudice. And numerous writers associated a stereotypical concept of African features with ugliness. The great German Renaissance artist Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528), for example, commented in his treatise on human proportion (1528) that 'The faces of the Moors are rarely lovely due to their very flat noses and thick mouths,' and in his reedition of Laonicus Chalcocondylas's

General History of the Turks, of 1620, Artus Thomas ridiculed Blacks as 'all look[ing] alike […] what we consider to be the most ugly is what they think makes them the most perfect and pleasant, such as a prominent nose that is large, flat, spread out, and snub; a big fleshy mouth; and the darkest of black skin.' Black ugliness was constructed as the antithesis of white beauty and virtue, and the language of 'dark' versus 'light' and 'black' versus 'white,' served to differentiate not only standards of beauty, but it also articulated differences between 'self' (European) and 'other' (non-European).

While notions of black ugliness were contingent on its antithesis to white beauty, within early modern Italian art theory beauty was defined without reference to skin color and on the basis of other criteria. From the fifteenth century onward, beauty (*bellezza*), especially in relation to sculpture and architecture, was most closely associated with proportion. In his treatise on architecture, Leon Battista Alberti (1404–1472), the humanist writer and architect, asserted that beauty 'consists in a certain agreement and harmony of the parts in a unity, according to an established number, proportion, and order.' According to the art critic and theorist Giovanni Battista Armenini (1530–1609), beauty is 'Nothing but a proper and well-ordered correspondence and proportion of measure among the parts in relation to each other and to the whole, with the parts arranged in such a way that one cannot imagine or desire a greater perfection.' Although the beauty of which he writes is that of style, it pertains no less to the human body. Paolo Pino (1534–1565), the Venetian art writer, makes this evident; citing the authority of Aristotle, he described beauty in terms of 'commensuration, and correspondence of limbs.' Similarly, the Florentine poet Benedetto Varchi (1503–1565) wrote that 'beauty is nothing other than the proper proportion and correspondence of all the limbs among them.'

Vincenzo Danti (1530-1576), the Italian sculptor and writer, related the concept of beauty to use, arguing that beauty depends upon function or the capacity for bodily action. Perfection of the body, he wrote, derives from 'the beautiful proportion of each part in itself and that of all the parts together […]. Such parts generate a harmony in which the beauty of bodies consists.' However, such beauty of the human body springs from 'perfect actions, or truly proportions, of all the limbs in all of the operations of man.' Beauty of the human body, he continued, can appear in all ages, but 'has its principal place and its perfect expression in youth, for in that age the combination of limbs has arrived at its perfect expression to be able to attain its end.' The most beautiful body, in other words, is capable of the most beautiful actions.

As this brief survey of the idea of beauty as formulated in Italian Renaissance art theory makes clear, *bellezza* was based upon perfect bodily proportions, the proper relationship among parts of the body, movement or the capacity for action, youth and – as other writers added – vivid expression, vivacity, and strength. What emerges from Baldinucci's narrative is the fact that Morgiano the enslaved man and Morgiano the statue were virtually identical and interchangeable, the statue being a 'portrait' depicted from life, a 'natural effigy' on the basis of which, the young future biographer recognised Morgiano the man. Tacca chose Morgiano and the other slaves he studied, according to his biographer, for their 'most graceful musculature,' their corporeal strength, which was 'best suited for imitation to form from them the most perfect body, and he made casts of their most beautiful parts.' Santelli described Morgiano as 'youthful, strong, well formed, muscular, in sum most perfect in all his parts, and of uncommon stature.' And Baldinucci also asserted that 'for his size and features,' the slave was 'bellissimo' and his statue 'bella.' This is to say that Morgiano was a large, vigorous, and well-built man, young and strong, perfectly proportioned, and commensurate in his parts. Although neither Santelli nor Baldinucci commented on his expression, the latter remarked on his features, which are, in fact (on his statue), in perfect balance in terms of their shape and size. With its large, downcast eyes, furrowed forehead, and tensed brow, the face of Morgiano also eloquently conveys his inner state of being – a profound sense of resignation and suffering. Finally, his muscular body, while static, shows the potential for action, with the right foot extended to the lowest step of the monument's base, the left leg bent sharply at the knee, the torso counterpoised by the turn of the head, and the arms drawn back and chained behind him. Baldinucci clearly recognised the beauty of Morgiano for his possession of all of the essential aspects of *bellezza* as defined in art theory. And perhaps that Morgiano was a galley slave, who depended on his uncommon size and strength, even facilitated such a qualitative description, for one of the few valued aspects of black Africans was their physical prowess and strength, essential aspects of masculine beauty.

In the end, the *Monument to Ferdinando I de' Medici* in Livorno is a highly complicated work – politically, socially, and morally. Despite the fact that it was created to glorify the Grand Duke of Tuscany, from almost the moment it was unveiled the *Quattro Mori* were the focus of viewers' attention. And these colossal bronze statues are, as we have seen, many things at once: vivid reflections of the Turkish, Maghrebi, and sub-Saharan African peoples who populated Livorno and comprised its slave labor force;

stereotyped depictions of humiliated and defeated Muslim captives; sympathetic figures, who, over the course of centuries, have elicited viewers' compassion; exquisite examples of bronze sculpture; and – at least for Morgiano – beautiful, both as a man and as a statue.

To many twenty-first-century viewers, though, the *Monument to Ferdinando I* can be seen as a racist work that glorifies a slave trader, akin to the Confederate statues and monuments that were erected in many public squares of Southern cities in the United States. Europe and Great Britain, too, saw many similar works put up, among them the statue of King Leopold II, who brutalized Congo (in Antwerp); the statue of Edward Colston, the seventeenth-century slave trafficker (in Bristol); the monument to General Louis Faidherbe, who played a key role in France's conquest of Senegal in the nineteenth century (in Lille); the statue of Robert Milligan, the eighteenth-century slaver who built the West India Docks (in London); the statue of Jan Pieterszoon Coen, a seventeenth-century Governor General of the Dutch East India Company (in Hoorn); and the statue of Antonio López i López, the nineteenth-century banker and slave merchant (in Barcelona). To these, among many others, can be added the Nelson Monument (in Liverpool) and the Monument to Prince Eugene of Savoy (in Budapest), which feature statues of bound captives, much like the monument in Livorno.

As is well known, the Civil Rights Movement, and the Black Lives Matter movement especially, triggered a necessary reevaluation of such monuments, not just in the United States but throughout the world. Since 2015, more than one hundred Confederate monuments, statues, and memorials in American cities have been removed by state and local governments or torn down by protestors. In 2018 the statue of Antonio López i López in Barcelona was taken down by the city council. In 2020 the statue of King Leopold II was removed after being defaced and burned. Edward Colston's statue was toppled by anti-racist protesters and dumped in Bristol's harbor, also in 2020. In the same year the mayor of London ordered the removal of the statue of Robert Milligan. And in June of 2020 the *Monument to Ferdinando I* also came under scrutiny. Demonstrators draped banners with 'Black Lives Matter' and 'No Justice No Peace' on the fence surrounding the monument, and some even called for it to be thrown into the sea (fig. 18). This was countered with posters, distributed by Livorno's representative in the Chamber of Deputies – a member of the right-wing, anti-immigrant Lega party – which declared 'Don't Touch the Four Moors' ('I 4 MORI NON SI TOCCANO'). How, then, should we reckon with what continues to be Livorno's most popular public monument and a lightning rod for controversy, so offensive to many?

FIG. 18
Demonstration in front of the *Monument to Ferdinando I de' Medici*, 13 June 2020

It is, I believe, fair to say that in contrast to virtually all of the Confederate monuments and the vast majority of those in England and Europe that were erected in honor of slave owners, slave merchants, those who fought to protect the institution of slavery, and colonial subjugators, the *Monument to Ferdinando I* is, artistically speaking, far superior. Bandini's statue of the grand duke at its center, as so many visitors (quoted above) acknowledged over the last nearly 400 years, is not a great work of art; it is a rather static and expressionless figure, more a symbol of a role than an inspired depiction of an individual. But it is a significant and characteristic piece of sculpture by one of late-Renaissance Florence's most accomplished sculptors. The *Quattro Mori*, in turn, are widely recognised as among Pietro Tacca's most accomplished works and, more generally, as masterpieces of Italian baroque sculpture. For these reasons alone the monument deserves preservation, arguably as all works of art do. But if its artistic

value advocates for its continued existence and protection, its social and political message, I suggest, do so even more forcefully, if presented in an appropriate way. In an ideal world, the monument should be transferred to a museum and shown with extensive didactic material to contextualise it – akin to the way the more challenging, even offensive, displays in the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C. are presented. The very power of the *Mori*, together with the history of the monument and its long, documented reception, eloquently communicate both the inhumanity and immorality of slavery. Properly explained, the monument offers vivid testimony to the existence of racism in seventeenth-century Italy – and, by extension, in modern Italy as well. For political, economic, social, and other reasons, however, dismantling the Livorno monument and moving it into a museum is very unlikely to happen. Even the majority of those who protested in front of it in 2020 defended its existence. As one of the leaders of the demonstrations at the monument stated: it is 'a distinctive symbol of Livorno; a work that has always [sic] represented the city, which must never be damaged in any way, or removed.' But were the placard next to the *Quattro Mori*, with its brief historical discussion of the monument, to be replaced by more serious and substantial texts that addressed, in addition to the work's history, the history of slavery in Italy, and the monument's complex racial implications, then the *Monument to Ferdinando I de' Medici* could serve as a tangible vestige of an historical legacy from which many still have much to learn. Rather than destroying or removing the monument – 'cancelling' it, in (unfortunate) modern parlance – it should be allowed to speak. And the same holds true for Ferdinando Tacca's small-scale bronze reductions of it in London and Madrid – which can serve to disseminate the same message to viewers.

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FIG. 15 'Nota di Numero 164 schiavi Mori de Galeoni quali sono nel Bagnio, di reccatto, et non Reccatto Boni al Remo,' fol. 1r, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota, James Ford Bell Library, MB 10314 1600f No, photo: Author

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FIG. 18 Demonstration in front of the *Monument to Ferdinando I de' Medici*, 13 June 2020, photo: *Livorno Today*

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